

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

## PUBLIC STATEMENT

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### **Thailand/India/Indonesia: Rohingyas at risk need protection**

Hundreds of Rohingyas fleeing systematic persecution in Myanmar require immediate assistance from Thailand, India, and Indonesia.

A group of 91 persons believed to be Rohingyas, who landed on the Andaman Islands, India, in early February 2011, claim that the Thai navy put them out to sea in January 2011 in an engineless boat with limited food and water. Thai authorities, however, claim that they returned 91 persons detained in Thailand to Myanmar in late January 2011. Amnesty International called on the government of Thailand to institute a prompt, independent and transparent investigation into how Thai authorities treated this group.

Thai authorities have detained hundreds of individuals claiming to be Rohingyas, including children, since January 2011.

A further 129 persons claiming to be Rohingya arrived in Aceh, Indonesia on 17 February 2011.

The Rohingya, who live in Myanmar's Rakhine State, suffer from systematic persecution, including forced labour, forced eviction, land confiscation, and severe restrictions on freedom of movement. The Myanmar government refuses to grant them citizenship, rendering them stateless, in violation of their international rights. Many Rohingyas have fled to Bangladesh, and have tried to seek work in other countries.

In late 2008 and early 2009, Thai security forces pushed hundreds of Rohingyas to sea in unseaworthy boats. Some of the Rohingyas subsequently died at sea. A number of those rescued are detained and remain with indeterminate status on the Andaman Islands, India without a proper assessment of their protection needs.

Amnesty called on the governments of Thailand, India and Indonesia to act on their obligations under international human rights and customary international law, including by giving persons claiming to be Rohingyas on their territory access to full and fair refugee determination procedures, and to grant the United Nations refugee agency, UNHCR access to them.

Amnesty International emphasized that the Rohingya would be at risk of human rights violations if returned to Myanmar. No Rohingyas, or other asylum seekers, should be returned to Myanmar against their will if they have a well founded fear of persecution.

Amnesty International has urged Myanmar to stop the systematic persecution of the Rohingyas. Amnesty International has also urged Myanmar's neighbours to provide the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) immediate access to all Rohingyas in their territory and to ratify the UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, its 1967 Protocol, and the UN Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons.